



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Epistle for the Week of March 5, 2020

Dear First Congregational,

Lent is underway and our “Immigration journey” at First Congregational unfolds. Where will God lead us?

As we consider the Bible’s teachings and our current context, how will we be led to act as people of faith? How will this Lenten journey influence our lives and our church’s mission?

Join me this Sunday as we welcome the Rev. Daniel Meyers, from Butler University (see bio below), who will explore this Lenten theme by preaching on the spiritual value of extending hospitality to the stranger. I am looking forward to being together Sunday for worship and lunch conversation with Rev. Meyers.

Peace,
Pastor Sarah

A Note about Emails from Pastor Sarah

It appears that several of you have received suspicious emails from someone claiming to be Pastor Sarah. Please check the email address for any emails you receive from Pastor Sarah. If the email is anything other than pastorsarah@fcindy.org, please do not open it. You may report the date it was sent and the email address used to Shannon at

shannon@rcindy.org, and she can report it to our IT support.

Worship



REMEMBER: This Sunday begins Daylight Savings Time, so set your clocks ONE HOUR AHEAD before you go to bed Saturday night!!!

Adult Class - March 8, 9:45 a.m.

This Sunday, our Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall, will lead us in a discussion on Black theology and Womanist theology. We'll discuss what these theologies are, why they're important, and some of the key voices within these theological movements. After this, we'll then consider their importance for our lives individually and as a church.

Sunday Worship Service, 11:00 a.m.

Guest preacher, Rev. Daniel Meyers will preach on "Better to Receive Rather Than Give: A Meditation on Hospitality."

This Sunday, we welcome Rev. Daniel Meyers, director of the Center for Faith and Vocation at Butler University, as guest preacher. A graduate of Willamette University (Oregon) in Biochemistry and Religious Studies, Meyers earned a Master of Divinity at Yale Divinity School, was ordained in the United Church of Christ, and completed a two-year position as Earl Hall Religious Life Fellow in the Office of the University Chaplain at Columbia University. He has served in his current role at Butler University since June of 2015. Daniel supervises the program that partners with our church's Just Peace Internship. Please join us in welcoming him and hearing what he has to share with us. **We will have a soup and bread lunch following worship.**

Scripture: Luke 9:1-6

A Note From Your Music Designer

Since my time here as music designer, I've explored many musical styles and ways to orchestrate them. Every organist brings to their congregation their preferred composers and repertoire. As many of you have witnessed, I often lean towards Mozart and Mancini, as well as several contemporary sacred and classical composers. This Sunday I would like to share with you another composer: me! Not only am I a pianist of classical and jazz training, an orchestrator and arranger, and singer; I am also a composer.

During this season of Lent, in addition to our church's Lenten journey focusing on immigration, I am also going through a personal Lenten journey aligned with a period of self-care, physically and emotionally. Therefore, I thought it was appropriate to share some of my own compositions born out of various reflections throughout my life. Like Mancini, many melodies I've composed have sometimes been repurposed for commercial uses such as music for television, film, and commercial recordings. However, no matter what the composition is used for, its creation always begins with inner reflection. Since a lot of times music for worship underscores the mood of the service, I am reminded of the similarity to how film music underscores the subconscious mood of the characters on the screen. To effectively compose melodies for film, the composer must reach into deep in the subconscious feelings and try to relate to the character(s). This is exactly how I compose melodies, whether for myself or for a commissioned purpose. Composition in this manner, to me, is different from songwriting where the focus begins with lyrics and an overt message rather than a subconscious mood.

The **Prelude** is entitled "The Lotus Spell." When I think about how a lotus lives on the surface of water, which a human is something we could potentially drown in and perish, I think of my spiritual faith and how beauty can come from darkness, perceived danger, and restlessness. I'm also reminded of baptism where we are first submerged in water and then brought back up to a new beginning.

The **Meditation** composition is called "Lenten Afterglow." This is a personal reflection on how achieving a rewarding, yet challenging journey through Lent can often leave a lingering and pleasant feeling upon completion. In both of these compositions, aside from spiritual growth, there is also a hint of wistfulness. For every new growth, what is left behind can linger as wistful memories.

The **Postlude** is called "In the Evening". God has created me for whatever reason to be a nocturnal being. This has served me well in my work as a performer, but this way of being began to manifest itself as early as adolescence which is exactly the time I began creating music. I often find my most productive prayer time very late in the evening. I also find my most

creative moments in the evening. A lot of the music I write for us here is usually done upon arriving home after a night of janitorial work. At the time of day when most are slowing down, the evening brings to me energy, creativity, excitement, and deep spiritual reflection.

If you recall our experiment with music and text a few weeks back exploring the Prayer of Our Savior, we learned that different interpretations or musical arrangements do not change the underlying meaning. Well, just to be fair, I'm giving my own music a similar test! These three compositions, originally set in various musical settings, will now be presented with infused Latin American rhythms. So, as you are reflecting subconsciously on my melodies and the reflections I've shared, you can also be reminded of our thoughts at the border.

— Sean Baker

First Congregational Lenten Immigration Journey

Through the season of Lent, we will explore, reflect, and pray about the biblical and contemporary theme of immigration. What does the Bible say about immigration? What is the Still Speaking God saying to the church today about immigration? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in light of the complex realities at the US/Mexico border? Through community worship and small groups, everyone is invited on this Lenten immigration journey. Let's see where this journey leads us.

March 2 - March 20: Small Groups (sign up sheets are in the narthex)

April 5 - April 10 - Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday

April 12 - Easter



What's Happening at FC

(See [March Colony](#) for monthly announcements and further details.)

Corona Virus and the Church: A Message from the IKC UCC

It is a near certainty that by now you've heard about coronavirus, a virus that is responsible for the upper-respiratory disease COVID-19. In our role in helping keep our congregations and communities informed and prepared, we'd like to share some resources about this disease that will help you have accurate information and put into place some best practices for avoiding illness. Rest assured that while we at the Conference level and the national

level of the United Church of Christ are keeping alert in order to help you stay healthy and safe, there is not at this time any reason to put extreme measures into place or limit public gatherings.

The UCC is committed to "education, caution and common sense" concerning coronavirus. Below is some helpful information about preventing the spread of coronavirus, and, indeed, any of the typical flu and common cold viruses. Click on any of the links below for more information:

- [Short educational video on the "5 Things to Know About COVID-19."](#)
- [Latest guidance from the Center for Disease Control \(CDC\).](#)
- [Resources from UCC Disaster Ministries.](#)
- [Read Rev. Traci Blackmon's \(UCC Associate General Minister for Justice & Local Ministries\) response to coronavirus.](#)

Of course, if you feel like you may be ill with COVID-19 (the disease caused by this coronavirus), seek medical advice. As Rev. Blackmon reminds us in her statement, "Under no circumstances should the information relayed here be construed as medical advice. These are simply public precautions gathered from available websites and best practices of various denominations."

Thank you for your care of each other by following these common sense guidelines:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (try singing the alphabet song one time through or just count to 20 at a steady rate). Do this especially every time you enter your home (or church) from being out and about.
- Use tissues to cover your coughs and sneezes (or cough/sneeze into the crook of your elbow) to prevent spreading germs around in the air.
- Throw out tissues immediately after use and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Clean doorknobs and frequently touched objects and surfaces in your homes and churches, so that germs that might be lingering don't get spread around.

With blessings for your health and the health of our world,
Rev. Chad Abbott, IKC Conference Minister &
Rev. Greg Denk, IKC Disaster Coordinator

TODAY! Men's Lunch - Thursday, March 5th at 1:00 p.m.

The next FCC Men's Lunch will be held at 1:00 PM on Thursday, March 5, 2020

at Claddagh (234 S Meridian St, Indianapolis, IN 46225). It's about two weeks before St Patrick's Day, so we thought we'd beat the rush.

Choir Rehearsal TONIGHT!

The FC Choir rehearses on Thursdays from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. We welcome new members. If anyone is interested in joining the choir, please email Julie at juliehouston@comcast.net. We would love to have you join us!

World Day of Prayer (hosted through Church Women United throughout Indianapolis), **Friday, March 6**

This year's service was written by our sisters in Zimbabwe around this theme - **"Rise! Take up our mats, and walk!"** - a call to not stay sitting, but to act on the word of God towards love, peace and reconciliation. Everyone is invited to join together in this global movement! Here are some of the locations and times available - for more locations and times around Indy and other information please see <http://www.wdp-usa.org/> For other questions please contact Karen Walker or Nancy Dickinson.

- Second Presbyterian Church, Milner Chapel (10:00 AM), 7700 North Meridian Street, 46260
- Northwood Christian Church (10:00 AM), 4550 North Central Avenue, 46205
- Shalom Mennonite Church (11:00 AM), 6100 East 32nd Street, 46226
- Robin Run Village (1:30 PM) - (Nancy Dickinson is playing a large part in planning this site's service), 5354 West 62nd Street, 46208
- Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (2:00 PM), 6417 Zionsville Road, 46268
- New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church (7:00 PM), 1535 Dr. A. J. Brown Avenue, 46202

Lenten Devotionals: For the Beauty of the Earth

Lenten devotionals are available for pick up in the narthex.

Lenten Breakfast Series: "God's Open House"

Saturday Mornings at 8:30 am

*** March 7: "Peace in the Home"**

Zion UCC (Troy Avenue)

8916 E Troy Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46239

*** March 14: "Justice in the Home"**

First Congregational UCC

7171 N. Pennsylvania St, Indianapolis, IN 46240

*** March 21: "Renewal in the Home"**

St. John (Cumberland)
11910 E Prospect St, Indianapolis, IN 46239

*** March 28: "Unity in the Home"**

Methodist Hospital (Downtown)
1701 N Senate Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46202

*** April 4: "God in the Home" (with Communion)**

Zion Evangelical UCC (Downtown)
603 N New Jersey St, Indianapolis, IN 46202

Take Action to Protect Refugee Resettlement with the GRACE Act

Join us in calling on Republican Members of Congress to co-sponsor the GRACE Act (S.1088 and H.R.2146).

The GRACE Act will help protect the refugee resettlement program by setting a minimum refugee admissions goal at 95,000 (the historic average since 1980) and increase congressional authority to hold the administration accountable to operate the resettlement program in good faith.

The GRACE Act has only Democrat cosponsors - now is a critical time for Republican Senators and Representatives hear that their constituents welcome refugees and want to see them co-sponsor the GRACE Act, so it can reflect the strong bipartisan support we know exists for refugee resettlement.

CALL YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES at (202) 224-3121.

Rep. Susan Brooks, 5th district

Rep. Jim Banks, 3rd district

Rep. Trey Hollingsworth, 9th district

Senator Todd Young

Sample Script: "I'm your constituent from [CITY/TOWN] and I urge you to protect refugees and rebuild the U.S. refugee resettlement program by cosponsoring the GRACE Act (S.1088/H.R.2146). The GRACE Act would restore the refugee resettlement program to the historic average of 95,000 since the program's inception in 1980 and hold the administration accountable to operating the refugee resettlement program in good faith. My community welcomes refugees, and I urge you to reflect the best of our nation by cosponsoring the GRACE Act."

Just Peace at the Border: Border Information and Vigil- March 10 at 6:30pm at Broadway UMC

Please join us at Broadway United Methodist Church for the second vigil in memory of Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez. For more information, contact Cyndi Alte at cdalte@aol.com

MARCH 10

**JOSE ANTONIO ELENA RODRIGUEZ
WAS KILLED BY BORDER PATROL
ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER**

WHAT: An educational program about what is happening at the U.S. Mexico border followed by a prayer vigil for Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez a young boy killed by U.S. Border Patrol Oct 10, 2012 in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico.

WHERE: Broadway United Methodist Church, 609 F 29th St.

WHEN: Tuesday March 10, 2020 6:30

WHO: For anyone who wants to learn more and help make a change.

www.broadwayumc.org/

WISE Mental Health Team

Would you like to join our W.I.S.E. Mental Health Team? We meet the **second Wednesday of each month at 5:00PM**. For more information, talk with Sandy Wood or Pat Larracey.

- **Mental Health First AID - 4/18, 7:30AM - 4:00PM** - Please sign the clipboard in the narthex for the MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CLASS, April 18, 7:30 to 4 PM. This is a great way to build an awareness of mental health symptoms!
- **Sunday, May 17 is W.I.S.E. Mental Health Sunday**, AND, the first **Spiritual Support Group** for Mental Health & Wellness.



Food Donations for the Northside Pantry

Donations have been generous and are appreciated. Please keep them coming! We are grateful to the Meridian Hills Nursery School and Kindergarten who has joined us in donating and delivering food to the pantry.

March Mission of the Month: One Great Hour of Sharing

The Mission of the Month in March is One Great Hour of Sharing. This is one of the five special offerings of the UCC and provides support around the world for disaster relief and community restoration. Begun after the devastation of World War II, Christian churches from a number of denominations responded to the call for international relief. Each denomination raised and directed their own funds but did so as a part of a common effort that beginning in 1950 has been called One Great Hour of Sharing. In 2020, the UCC will use our offering to respond to international disasters, to assist refugees in the United States, and to help communities become more sustainable with programs that help people to help themselves. This offering is our opportunity to share with the people of the world and be present when our love and support are most in need.

Pantry Items of the Month

During the month of March, we are collecting: spaghetti, rice, juices, peanut butter, and bar soap.

Pastoral Care

Pastor Sarah may be reached at (386) 478-9012 or at pastorsarah@fcindy.org.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

Thursday, March 5	1:00 p.m.	Men's Lunch at Claddagh
Thursday, March 5	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, March 7	8:30 a.m.	Lenten Breakfast @ Zion (Troy Ave) UCC
Sunday, March 8	9:45 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class w/ Student Pastor, Cassidy Hall
Sunday, March 8	11:00 a.m.	Worship w/ guest preacher, Rev. Daniel Meyers
Sunday, March 8	12:00 p.m.	Lunch with Rev. Daniel Meyers

Tuesday, March 10	6:30 p.m.	Border Vigil @ Broadway UMC
Wednesday, March 11	5:00 p.m.	WISE Mental Health Team
Wednesday, March 11	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday, March 12	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, March 14	8:30 a.m.	Lenten Breakfast @ FC
Sunday, March 15	9:45 a.m.	Sunday Adult Class
Sunday, March 15	11:00 a.m.	Worship
Sunday, March 15	12:15 p.m.	Student Pastor Support Group
Sunday, March 15	12:30 p.m.	Lenten Group
Sunday, March 15	12:45 p.m.	PCRC w/ Pastor Sarah